

"THE BANDWAGON"

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August - 1942

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SPARKS' WORLD FAMOUS SHOWS - Season 1916.  
(second instalment) - By C.E. Duple, CHS.

The Big Top for that year was four poles, with two rings and an elevated stage. A well balanced program was presented. Just a few of the acts at that time were John and Maude Holland, riders; Conners Troupe on the tight wire; Hillary Long did a slide down an incline while doing a head stand; Capt. Tiebor's Seals; Merritt Belew trained horses and ponies; Mrs. York; Jung; McLain; Winslow and others were among the aerial performers and and menage riders; Louis Reed was elephant man, and Fritz Brunner trained Lions. Jim and Dolly Eskew appeared with others in the Wild West Concert. Harry Mick was a female impersonator on the track before performance and created a lot of amusement.

Circus folks were surprised to pick up newspapers one morning in late November 1928 and read a dispatch that the Sparks World Famous Shows had just been sold to other parties -- the American Circus Corporation, through H.B. Gentry. The large sum involved was not made public. The new owners operated the circus for the 1929 season, and the same year in September, John Ringling bought the five circuses of the American Circus Corporation e.g. Sells-Floto; John Robinson; Hagenbeck-Wallace; Sparks Circus and Al.G. Barnes, along with other titles including Buffalo Bills Wild West that had been shelved for some years.

The final year of the Sparks Circus was 1931, opening at Chester, Pa., and under the Ringling banner the show played the usual Eastern and New England territory as in former years also through the South. At the close of the season the train with all equipment was taken to Sarasota, Fla., The writer was informed a few years ago, the cars have lain there all this time on a side track, and the wagons on the ground in the open. The SPARKS WORLD FAMOUS SHOWS we shall always remember as one of America's Representative Circuses.

Charles Sparks was owner of the Downie Bros., Circus 1930 to 1938. This was the "Barnum of all Motorized Shows" and made the old territory of the Sparks Rail Show. The Downie show was sold to other parties in February 1939, and it was operated by them for only one season.

Now retired, Chas. Sparks, is among the most highly respected and popular circus men of the White Tops. During his long career as Owner-Manager, his splendid and clean organizations were, as the bills proclaimed;--"A Supreme Achievement in Clean Amusement".-

The End.

--OLD WAGON SHOWS I HAVE SEEN--

Notes by William Purtil - Rhode Island Fan.

Sig Sautelle Show for 1911 was about the last of the old wagon shows. Geo.W. Rollins and Oscar Lowanda were the owners that year. It was later enlarged to a 12 car rail show touring Eastern States. The first season was successful and the following season the show was enlarged to 22 cars. Disagreements arose however and business fell off and after a disastrous tour in 1914 the show closed in August at Binghamton, N.Y.,

I knew Sig Sautelle well. The first time I saw his show was in 1895. It was a small wagon show at that time. I also saw the W.L. Main Wagon Show in 1888; the Chas. Lee Wagon Show in 1890. Other old time shows were T.K. Burk; Washburn and Arlington in 1890. Others on the road in those good old days were Bob Hunting, W.B. Reynolds and J.H. La Pearl.

While Harris Nickel Plate Show Matinee was going on at Sigourney, Iowa; June 12th 1902 - a tornado levelled the big top, injuring 95 persons.

C.E.D.



A LIST OF RAILROAD CARS REPORTED FOR USE BY CIRCUSES FOR SEASON of 1911. Compiled by the Pennsylvania Railroad - and sent to the Editor for publication by that well known circus fan and Collector - A.L. Chumley of Chattanooga, Tenn., - All Members will no doubt be interested in this fine data, and many thanks for the opportunity to print the same is due to Mr. Chumley.--

<u>Title of Circus</u>	<u>Number of cars</u>
Barnum & Bailey - - - - -	84
Ringling Bros.- - - - -	81
Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Combined - - - - -	48
Hagenbeck-Wallace - - - - -	45
John Robinson - - - - -	38
Sells-Floto - - - - -	30
Campbell Bros.- - - - -	28
Cole Bros.- - - - -	25
Norris & Rowe - - - - -	22
Gollmar Bros. - - - - -	22
Miller Bros., 101 Ranch Wild West Show- - - - -	21
Howard Damon- - - - -	20
Yankee Robinson - - - - -	16
Rice Bros.- - - - -	12
Dode Fisk - - - - -	11
Gentry Bros., - No. 1 Shew- - - - -	10
Gentry Bros., - No. 2 Show- - - - -	9
Sun Bros. - - - - -	10
Mighty Haag - - - - -	10
Welsh Bros. - - - - -	8
M.L. Clark & Sons - - - - -	7
John H. Sparks- - - - -	7

Total cars - for the 22 circuses . . . . . 564

Other circuses on the road in 1911 but not included above were:-

W. H. Coulter's R.R. Show	Thompkins Western Attractions
Cole & Rogers	Lucky Bill's Shows
Richards Bros., Wagon Wagon Show	Nelson Wild West Shows
Lombard's Imperial Shows (wagon)	Bronco Bob's Wild West
Kit Carson's Buffalo Ranch (r.r.)	J.E. Henry's Show
Howe's Great London Shows	Keystone Show
Honest Bill Show (wagon)	Forepaugh-Sells Bros.
Beckman's Animal Show	Jones' Bros. Buffalo Ranch W.W.
Smith's Colossal Shows	Webb & Long Dog & Pony Show
Al.G. Barnes Wild Animal Shows	Famous Robinson's
Young Buffalo Wild West	Billie Boughton's Shows
Cole & Rice Show	Sig Harris' Show Beautiful
John Robinson's	John H. Morgan R.R. Shows
California Frank's All-Star W. West	J.H. Eschman's European Circus
Masterson R.R. Show	

Now, Members - come along and give us some historical facts about some of the little-known titles in the above list. Let's hear from you.

#### TERRELL JACOBS CIRCUS PHOTOS

First views of train, wagons, animals, etc., To those who ordered - I am sorry that supply of photos became exhausted. Orders mailed soon.

Send 10¢ for detailed list and sample postcard photo.

Walter W. Tyson, 27 Green St.,  
Guelph, Ontario. Canada.

#### PHOTOS OF TERRELL JACOBS

WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS. \$1.20 for set of 12, postcard size.

Nicely assorted, train, wagons, animals and personnel.

Also Cole Bros., 1939; RBBB 1939; and Hagenbeck-Wallace 1938. Will trade these latter photos.

Jack Lyon, 22-A Charles Street,  
Guelph, Ontario. Canada.



NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY'S MAILBAG

We have had many fine compliments on the way The Bandwagon is being put out. We shall try and keep up the quality of the paper, and justify the confidence of the members in us.

Members will find attached to this copy of The Bandwagon, an up to date Membership List. You will notice there are several well-known names added since last list was issued.

CHS is quickly assuming "International" scope - through the co-operation of Burns Kattenberg CHS of Mansfield, O., we have secured as a member Eduardo F. Titus of Chile, South America. Mr. Titus has a very extensive library of Circus Literature - covering several foreign languages. We are also pleased to announce membership of another Canadian member -- E.W. Cripps of Brantford, Ontario.

While it is not the policy of THE BANDWAGON to recommend any outside ventures - still, C.C. Day of Washington, D.C. is to be congratulated on his initiative in endeavoring to put a third rail show on the road. Those who might wish further information - please write to 2518-13th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Ted Meyer CHS of Grand Island, Nebr., writes that he and Art. Stensvad CHS of North Platte, Nebr., had a most enjoyable day on July 7th when Cole Bros., Circus played Grand Island.

Frank Norton CHS now employed as agent for the Bright Lights Exposition Shows writes that before mounting his circus photos he trims them all to a standard size, and mounts them with Art Corners. By so doing, photos can be interchanged, or replaced with better views.

It might be of special interest to note that Mr. A. Morton Smith, Editor of the HOBBIES Circusiana Department has made mention of many CHS members during the past few months. Don F. Smith, Founder of CHS received special mention, along with W.W. Green Jr., Chas. Campbell, Burt L. Wilson, Gordon M. Potter CHS-Vice Pres.; Dr. H.H. Conley; Burns M. Kattenberg; C.E. Duble; W.W. Tyson CHS-Pres.; and others.

Chas. Kitto, CHS of Beloit, Wisc., sends the following interesting item (from Rockford (Ill) Register-Republic) -- "Hess & Hopkins Leather Co., long established and famous Rockford manufactory, has an old flagpole erected years and years ago. It was the centre pole of the main tent of the Reynolds Circus, a Rockford entertainment venture which started about 1890 and lasted only a few years.

"The flagpole is now over 50 years old. It's pretty and heavy and because of its antiquity, a bit uncertain. That the American flag may fly over the Hess & Hopkins plant daily, a new pole is on the agenda of the institution.

"From W.B. Reynold's route book for 1892 we gather that that was its first season. The circus opened at Rockford, then a town of 30,000 souls, on Sat. May 7th. On May 9th it appeared in Pecatonica, population 1,500; on May 10th at Freeport, population 16,000; on May 11th at Lanark, population 1,500. Polo's population of 10,000 saw the show on May 12th; Sterling with 7,000, entertained the circus on Saturday the 14th".

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"THE AUCTION COLUMN"

Lot 1: 6 Photos of Lemen Bros. Circus 1897. Size  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  showing parade and lot scenes.. Offered by W.W. Green, Jr.

Lot 2: Tom Mix Circus route book for season 1937, together with a lerald for Lewis Bros., and one for Atterbury Bros., Circus. Offered by Walter W. Tyson.

Lot 3: National Geographic, Oct. 1931, with fine illustrated circus article by Kelley. Every collector should have this. Tyson.

Bids to be in Secretary, Jack Lyon's hands not later than August 22nd. Address; 22-A Charles St., Guelph Ontario., Canada. Remember -- even a small bid will possibly take these items. Proceeds go to CHS Treasury.



Since the beginning of CHS, the Editor and Publishers of the Bandwagon, have striven to supply our members with authoritative notes by the best Circus Historians, and performers of another day. We are now proud to present a short "sermonette" by Doc Waddell, the Circus Parson, who has spent 70 years in show business, and is beloved by all who know him, for he is the friend of all, and especially the common-man.

His Mother was an equestrienne with the Original John Robinson Circus and his early days were spent on that show, although he was later associated with most of the other big shows of the early 20th Century, and tells rich stories of each.

----But -- "Doc" -- has mounted the rostrum, so let's listen!

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"BANDWAGON"

By  
Doc Waddell

BANDWAGON! What a name! The angels in Heaven have harps and choir. There's music in Paradise. Love is its "Father-Mother", and God is Love. So, when God gave language to the Earth, standing out, in bold relief, was "BAND-WAGON"- The Home, on slides or rollers, for the musicians of Israel, to ride in. "Adam" had the first show on Terra Firma, featuring himself; His Charming Wife "Eve"; the Educated Serpent; and, all the animals we now have. My, what a show grounds he had -- the whole of God's "Garden of Eden"! The "Big Top" of Fig Leaf. The first Circus parade passed before "Adam", and he gave names to all the animals and everything that was in the pageant. When that first vehicle passed, in which was the first Circus Band, I can hear "Old Adam" thundering out its name, forever and forever, "Bandwagon". From then to now, Bandwagon progression has been wonderful. To my way of classifying, I believe "The Peacock Bandwagon", the old John Robinson "Ten Big" Shows had in 1905, 1906 and 1907, took the "Blue Ribbon" over all other such circus chariots. The sides were Monster Peacocks, wood-carved and perfectly colored. The Designer, Carver, and Gilder, was the late Edward Van-Skiak, gifted Draftsman, Painter, Musician, and Reserved-seat ticket salesman. And, every Chariot and Cage, following "The Peacock Bandwagon", in parade, was specially designed, and wrought, and painted by him. "Where did you get idea of the figures and characters you use?" I once asked him. "In Barbershops, and Hotel Parlors, and homes of the Elite, from the paper, and decorations on the walls, and roundabout", he answered. Only one Edward Van-Skiak - only one "Super Bandwagon", and that "The Peacock", his creation, on the Old John Robinson "Ten Big". Sweet it is to pay his memory tribute in "The C.H.S. Bandwagon" of today.

AND THE OLD WORLD  
RAMBLES RIGHT ALONG

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Note : Don Smith appeared with the Circus Parson before several thousand inmates of Michigan State Prison on August 2nd. An account of this experience will be given in a later issue. W.W.T.

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CHS Members will find enclosed with this issue of the Bandwagon a photo of the well-known Sparks Circus "Red and Gold Lion Cage" that used to be a feature of the parades on this well known show. This photo is from the Negative owned by W.W. Tyson, and photo was taken in Guelph, Ontario, Canada on May 31st, 1920 and serves as the picture to illustrate the Sparks article concluded in this issue, which was written by our Historian, C.E. Duble.

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Flash! Don't fail to secure a copy of Sat. Evening Post (August 8th). It contains a fine color-illustrated article on Gainesville Community Circus.  
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